

First Lieutenant Garrison Avery died an American soldier, and America will be eternally grateful for his sacrifice.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BACA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP CELEBRATE WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, first I want to take this opportunity to thank House Democratic Leader NANCY PELOSI for the opportunity for the 30-Something Working Group to talk for an hour about the things that we know are important to our generation, and also to explain and discuss our views on our generation's perspective on a lot of the issues that are important and facing Americans today.

Tonight I am really pleased to be joined during Women's History Month by two of my distinguished colleagues who are also members of Leader PELOSI's 30-Something Working Group, Congresswoman STEPHANIE HERSETH

from the great State of South Dakota and Congresswoman LINDA SÁNCHEZ of California. The three of us make up a very unique body in this group. We are three of only four women younger than 40 years old in the United States House of Representatives.

We are here this evening to celebrate Women's History Month, to remember those who have contributed to our progress, to recognize the women of our generation who are changing communities today, and to highlight the challenges that many women under 40 face as a result of the flawed and failed policies of the Bush administration.

This year's theme, Mr. Speaker, for Women's History Month is Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams. This theme speaks to the legacy that women leaders have built over the generations.

Mr. Speaker, as advanced and progressive as America has been on issues improving the lives of women, our country continues to lag far behind in terms of policies to assist women in their struggle to lead or achieve.

Today women represent more than half the population and are among the most knowledgeable and important thinkers in every field of policy, from science to education, to health care and national security.

As the mother of two young daughters, it is so important to me to see that strong women walk in all walks of life, and I want them to see strong women in all walks of life, particularly so that we can see that those women join our ranks here as policymakers.

I want them to understand that from Title IX to the Equal Pay Act, that they are standing on the shoulders, as we do here, of the courageous women who went before them.

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None of the three of us would have had the opportunity that we did at our stage in life without our colleagues who came before us in this body, without their shoulders to stand on, and I want them and other young women and girls to have the same opportunities that we have been given.

Unfortunately, the President apparently does not share those same views because in his 2007 budget proposal he slashes programs established to give young working mothers a leg up, like Medicare, Medicaid, housing, food stamps and child care. He cuts programs aimed at preventing domestic violence and programs that provide domestic violence victims with housing and legal assistance.

I am saddened to say that domestic violence affects far too many women, and an even growing number of young women. Forty percent, Mr. Speaker, of teenage girls ages 14 to 17 report knowing someone their age that has been hit or beaten by a boyfriend, and 26 percent of girls in grades 9 through 12 have been the victim of abuse.

So tonight we are here because training, education, and employment statis-

tics clearly indicate that women still face barriers in pursuing traditionally male-dominated fields. For instance, while the number of women pursuing degrees in higher education has increased dramatically, the rates of women pursuing engineering degrees lags far behind. Recent data shows that women account for only small percentages of students earning engineering degrees, including only 20 percent of bachelor's degrees, 21 percent of master's degrees, and only 17 percent of Ph.Ds.

We are here, Mr. Speaker, because the Republicans' prescription drug plan is a particularly bad deal for America's women. Women are frustrated and confused, Mr. Speaker. And if you think government health and prescription drug care is only for the aged, you should know that 63 percent of Medicaid beneficiaries were between the ages of 18 and 44 in 2001, and 37 percent of women ages 18 to 44 report that they use at least one prescription drug on a regular basis. Those are not senior citizen statistics.

We are here tonight because 36 percent of the 9.4 million women in executive, administrative, and managerial occupations are under 44 years old, and, on average, women are still making about 76 cents for every dollar that a man makes.

We are here because opponents of the Family and Medical Leave Act are working to hamstring that program, even though it is in its 12th successful year, and more than 50 million Americans have displayed their enthusiastic support by taking job protective leave to care for a new baby, a seriously ill family member, or to recuperate from their own serious illness. And the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SÁNCHEZ) is going to be covering how the administration's policies have impacted working women and working families in particular.

And we are here because there are not too many of us to speak up, and we must make our voices heard. There are 26 men under 40 serving in the United States Congress, Mr. Speaker. They have several voices. More than several. We are here because if we do not stay late on this floor, if we do not stand up and try to make a difference on behalf of young women and young families and bring these issues that are important to them to the table, the three of us together, 3 versus 26, then who will? That is the question that we would like to answer tonight.

I am happy to yield now to my good friend, the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. LINDA SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I am excited and honored to be here tonight to help celebrate Women's History Month. I am hoping tonight that my colleagues and I can share with everyone what it is like to be a young woman in Congress and how we got our start here.

In addition, I am interested in sharing my thoughts on where women stand in today's workforce. I am proud

to stand here tonight with Representative DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Representative STEPHANIE HERSETH because together we make up the youngest women in the U.S. House of Representatives. It is my hope that someday soon there will be more than just three of us standing up here. In fact, I think it would be fantastic if we could fill up at least half of this Chamber with bright energetic women from across America.

I want to talk for a moment about women in the workforce, because every morning in households across America, women rise. We rise for work, we rise to care for children, we rise for the love of our jobs and for the love of our families. We rise to put food on the table, and we rise to make ends meet. Above all, we rise to our calling because we can, because we are capable.

No matter what a woman does for a living, we as women have a lot in common because it was not so long ago that women were forced to hide in the shadows of the American workforce. Today, we are a strong and vital part of the American economy and more women work outside the home than ever before. We continue to gain more career opportunities and achieve professional successes in all fields. But have we truly reached equality in the American workforce? Sadly, the answer is no.

The Equal Pay Act was passed more than 40 years ago, yet women still only make 76 cents for every dollar that a man makes, even when accounting for factors such as occupation, industry, race, marital status and job tenure. This gap has persisted for two decades. The glass ceiling is as shiny as it ever has been. According to a recent op-ed in *USA Today*, we still have miles to go before we can claim true equality.

Women make up less than 15 percent of Congress and law-firm partners, 12 percent of big-city mayors, 9 percent of judges, and just 1 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs. Women and men have had equal levels of post-high school education for 30 years, but the gender and color of those in power has not changed much in that time.

My experiences during my first year in Congress are very similar to the experiences that I had as a young female attorney. You have to work twice as hard as men to dispel people's doubts about preconceived notions that they might have of you. I had to deal with that from day one in Washington. Many people in Washington, D.C. are still not convinced that I am a Congresswoman because I am young, female, and Latina. A lot of people still assume that Members of Congress are men, and that leads to a whole lot of double standards here. In addition, I was surprised to learn that I am the first Latina in the history of the United States House of Representatives to serve on the Judiciary Committee and the Immigration Subcommittee.

In every field, the higher up you look, the fewer women you see. And if

you look in the other direction, women still remain disproportionately concentrated in lower-paying jobs. This means that it is far more likely for women to live in poverty than men. The bottom line? Don't be fooled. While we are making gains, true workforce equality still remains an elusive goal. But it is a goal I am not willing to give up on.

Tonight, we celebrate Women's History Month because we have come so far after so much struggle and we deserve an opportunity to reflect our successes. Today, we are here to honor the successes of pioneering women who came before us, to examine where we are now, and to prepare for the future.

We already know that women are smart, but no matter how smart you are, it is tough to win when the rules dictate unequal pay for unequal work. A colleague of ours, Congresswoman DELAURO, has introduced the Paycheck Fairness Act, legislation that would take critical steps to empower women to negotiate for equal pay, create strong incentives for employers to obey the laws that are in place, and strengthen Federal outreach and enforcement efforts. I encourage people to contact their Member of Congress and let them know they support H.R. 1687, the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Right now, there are only 88 cosponsors on Congresswoman DELAURO's bill. Out of the 435 elected voting Members of the House of Representatives, that still leaves 347 Members of Congress who have yet to support this bill. Now, I cannot imagine why 347 Members are not willing to stand up for women's pay equality for our daughters, mothers, and sisters. Mr. Speaker, I hope people pick up the phone and remind their Representatives to get on this bill and show that they truly value women's contributions in the workforce.

Women's increased access to higher education will be a moot point until our society provides better policies for working women. We owe it to our mothers, sisters and daughters. And while talking about better policies, I want to briefly touch as well on the minimum wage. Democrats in Congress are committed to raising the minimum wage to ensure that no one who works for a living lives in poverty.

While the number of Americans in poverty has increased by 4.3 million since President Bush took office, the minimum wage has been frozen at \$5.15 since 1997. Democrats introduced the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2005, legislation that would raise the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 an hour and help lift millions of Americans out of poverty. Women and children are the number one victims of poverty in this country, so I think it is important to remember that by raising the minimum wage we will be significantly raising the status of women and children.

In order to truly commemorate Women's History Month, I think we need to

remember that actions speak louder than words. I know the American public is tired of hearing politicians highlight our country's problems without offering any real-life solutions. Tonight, I have touched on two problems and I have named two real solutions that are on the table right now. All that is left for us to do is to act.

Let us achieve real pay equity for women and raise the minimum wage. Together, America can do better on behalf of all women and all working families.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am pleased to yield back to the Representative from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I thank my colleague, and I will now yield, Mr. Speaker, to the gentlewoman from South Dakota.

Ms. HERSETH. I thank the gentlewoman from Florida and both of my colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I am just so pleased to be here this evening joining with my 30-something fellow Democratic women in honor of Women's History Month.

I look forward through the course of the next partial hour to talk about suffrage, such an important part of women's history, and getting our right to vote so that the three of us can be standing here today having the support of so many women in the constituents that we represent; being able to exercise our voting privileges on this House floor because of the importance of the suffrage movement in this country.

I also look forward to talking about some unique perspectives I would like to share, representing a rural district, about rural women and the role that they played in suffrage for women's history and getting the right to vote, some of the unique challenges they face for employment opportunities, health care for rural women, and also to spend some time talking about Title IX and its importance for all women.

I am very honored to be here tonight, as I mentioned, and I want to reiterate the thanks that Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and Ms. SÁNCHEZ gave to our leader, NANCY PELOSI, who herself became such an important part of women's history in being elected the first woman as the Democratic whip, followed by the first woman to be elected leader of one of the political parties represented here in this House of the people. To be joining all three of them tonight is particularly important as we share our ideas on issues important to women in honor of Women's History Month.

I also think it is important throughout the next few minutes for each of us to share what brought us here in the first place and how we benefited from the women who paved the way before us. I am a farm girl from South Dakota. The small town near where I grew up on the farm, population less than 100, Houghton, South Dakota, is a long ways from the House of Representatives. But I would venture to

guess that some of my experiences reflect some similarities of my two colleagues and other women that we work with here in the Congress. Many women serve in the Senate and our State legislatures, our county commissions, school boards and city councils, and we hope one of these days, the White House.

Now, I was born on a farm and ranch, third generation in the family, and my dad, like his dad before him, continues to work and farm a ranch in the north-eastern part of South Dakota. But while farming and ranching were our livelihood and our profession, we had another passion, and that was State government and politics. My grandfather served as Governor in the late 1950s, my grandmother served as Secretary of State in the 1970s, and my dad was in the State legislature. As my mom likes to say, it wasn't just in the blood, it was part of the genetic code.

And so when we share these experiences, either with our own children or our nieces or our goddaughters or our cousins, I think it is important that we make it part of the dinner-table conversation, as I would imagine the three of us had in many respects. It is one thing that I think has substantially changed for our generation. I think for earlier generations of women, they maybe didn't have the exposure or the influence and the encouragement to be part of the debate about public issues and to be encouraged to seek public office.

As I travel across my district, as I am sure my colleagues do, you see these young girls, 8 years old, 9 years old, 10 years old, and they come up and they want their parents to bring them to an official meeting or some other public event and they tell you they want to serve in Congress someday or they want to run for Governor. And it is so heartening because it reminds us of the importance of so much of what we are doing for them and for younger girls and women to know that they can do it too.

Now, when I was first getting involved, so much attention was given to my dad and my grandfather, but it was my grandmother who was the first to get involved, before she ever became a Herseth. She ran in the Great Depression for superintendent of county schools, back in the mid- to late 1930s. She paved the way. She wasn't going to let conventional wisdom get in her way. She ran at a time when it was so difficult and she used her salary, it was an elected position in South Dakota, and she used that salary to help put her two nieces through college. She would share with me stories about serving as superintendent of county schools, the importance of education, and then serving as first lady and secretary of state, and she had an extraordinary influence on my life.

That is why I think it is so important for all of us to know that these are precious gifts we have been given by women who have paved the way before

us, and that for those of us with children or sisters or grandchildren and nieces, we need to make sure that we are talking to them about the importance of what we have done to continue to help pave that way, to keep the door open, and to open new doors for women to have an influence in public policy and in public life and government at all levels.

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Let me just share a quote when we talk about some of the women that have paved the way. I want to sort of selfishly focus on some of the women who were from my area of the country in the late 1800s and early 1900s and part of the women's suffrage movement.

But Ruth Bader Ginsburg, now the only woman serving on the United States Supreme Court, noted, "I think about how much we owe to the women who went before us, legions of women, some known, but many more unknown, and I applaud the bravery and resilience of those who have helped all of us, you and me, to be here today."

Well, among some of these women is Esther Morris, the first woman to hold a judicial position, who led the first successful State campaign for woman's suffrage in Wyoming in 1869.

Also we have Carrie Chapman Catt. She revitalized the National American Women's Suffrage Association and played a leading role in its successful campaign to win voting rights for women. In 1920, she founded the League of Women Voters upon ratification of the 19th amendment to the Constitution.

Carrie Lane was born in Wisconsin, and at the age of 7, her family moved to rural Iowa where she graduated in 1877. She graduated from the Iowa Agricultural College and model farm in Ames, Iowa. I make note of agriculture here because I am the only Democratic woman serving on the Agriculture Committee, and only three of our Republican colleagues serve on that important committee. She then became the first woman in the Nation to be appointed superintendent of schools. This was in 1883.

In addition, the first woman ever elected to the United States Senate was Jeanette Rankin from Montana in 1919. And in South Dakota the first woman we ever elected to the United States Senate was 1938, Gladys Pyle. And 66 years later, in 2004, they elected their first woman to the United States House of Representatives, and I shared that year with Cecilia Firethunder, a constituent of mine who became the first woman to be elected president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

So we are making strides every year, more to be made to be sure. But I think it is very important as we celebrate and talk about Women's History Month and the challenges that remain that we make mention of some of these women

that went before us and the influence they had on the entire women's movement and Women's History Month, but some of the closer people that served as role models and influenced our lives.

I am curious to hear more about both of your experiences and what brought you to the United States Congress.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, as Ms. HERSETH was talking, I was struck by our diversity. Our commonality is we are all under 40, but literally we represent the East, Midwest and west coast of our country, California, South Dakota, and Florida. We also represent a very different ethnic and cultural diversity. We have a Midwesterner, a nice Jewish girl from the suburbs, and we have a Latina from the West Coast. You could not have more diversity than what is standing in this Chamber this evening.

What is wonderful about that is that is what the Democratic Party is all about. We are the embodiment of the Democratic Party. We are the embodiment of what Democrats represent and stand for. It is not just amazing that we had the opportunity at the age we were when we each got involved, but it is, I think, particularly notable that we had that opportunity because of the opportunities that Democrats try to provide in terms of diversity. I think if we were attempting to get involved at the point we did in our lives and we were Republicans, it would have been a very different experience and perhaps some very shiny glass ceilings, as you referred to.

I was 25 when I started running for the Florida House of Representatives. I would imagine that in South Dakota it is probably that you have to be fifth-generation South Dakotan before you would think about running for public office, certainly running for Congress. I had only lived in my community for 3 years when I decided to run for the State House of Representatives. For me, that was no different than anyone else who lives in my community. If you are from south Florida now, you certainly are not from south Florida since birth.

The reason I was able to contemplate the possibility of running was because we have had so many of the women we serve with here really provide us their shoulders to stand on because they fought in the 1970s and even some in the 1960s to make it possible for women to bust through that glass ceiling; that I was able to even think about running for office when I was 25, just married a year, my husband and I had just bought our first house. We knew we wanted to have kids. I was raised to believe my parents at dinner table conversation, I would not have to choose. A woman could be a good mom, have a solid marriage and be a hardworking professional, and do all of those things well.

So the generation before us of women, because they made that possible, because they strove to accomplish that, it made it almost if not a no-brainer. It made it so much more

reasonable for someone, for people like us to step up when we were presented with the opportunity. I was able to seize that opportunity when the seat opened up in the State legislature for me because so many women had paved the way before.

The experience I had in my race for Congress was so disheartening. I was successful obviously because I am standing here, but I actually had to deal with an opponent who spent the whole election, and this is Women's History Month, we are in 2006, and she spent the whole election saying that I was a bad mother. She spent the entire election saying she was 20 years older than me and had waited until her children were grown before she thought about running, and basically I had some nerve running with young children. I have twin 6-year-olds, a boy and a girl, and a 2½-year-old baby girl.

I ran for them. I ran so I could show my little girls that there are so many things that are important that we do here, and that it is imperative that our perspective, our generation's perspective and the perspective of young moms and young women are here in this Chamber.

We deal with issues that I know we would not deal with if not for young women's presence here; women, period.

But the statistic that strikes me is that in history, and I am a freshman, I am the least senior of the three of us, what I learned when I came here, and I know they probably told you this, too, when you came for your orientation, but we have had just under 12,000 people in American history serve in the United States Congress, and of those we literally have had just over 200 women out of 12,000 people.

Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California. When I ran for Congress, I had sort of a unique situation in that I had an older sister who was a trailblazer. She was elected in 1996, and when I ran and was elected, we were the first two women of any relation to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

There have been over 1,000 male relationships, either fathers and sons, uncles and nephews, male cousins. Never in the history of Congress until the year 2002 had two women of any relation served in Congress. It is a stark contrast in terms of we are making those strides, but we still have so much further to go.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Absolutely. The thing that I learned that shocked me given that I am from Florida and we have the third highest Jewish population in my community in the country, I am the first Jewish woman to ever represent the State of Florida in the Congress. Our first U.S. Senator to ever represent Florida ever was actually a Jewish man, and that was back in the 1800s when Florida joined the Union. And it took until 2004 for Congress to send a Jewish woman to Congress.

The expression we have come a long way but we have a long way to go is an

accurate one. We have so much that we can talk about. I think that the thing that I want to highlight is that we have issues that are important to women and families that would not get addressed if we were not here in the numbers we are here.

Child care, subsidized child care in particular. I was shocked last year when I learned in the President's budget that he put forward last year that he actually proposed a drastic cut in the number of subsidized child care slots that we would fund. We are talking about how it is possible for us to stand on the shoulders of other women and even think about running. We are talking about service in the House of Representatives. It simply is not possible for women to work who are moms, especially single moms, if they do not have the ability to have their children cared for and well cared for. So for each successive budget that I have seen, yet again the President has opposed a cut in subsidized child care cuts.

It is just astonishing to me the priorities that this administration has where it seems to be more important to preserve tax cuts for the wealthiest few at all costs, and never mind the women who need health care, who only get it when they are on Medicaid; never mind young children who receive Medicaid, and that is the only source of health care; never mind moms who need to make sure that they can work and have a place to send their children for quality child care. I just do not understand where their priorities are.

Ms. HERSETH. Just to make a note on the health care issues and child care, in South Dakota we are among the highest percentage per capita of women who work outside the home. Many of those women are single mothers, and those who are a second income earner, either off the farm or in town, then struggle not only with the child care costs, but access to a child care provider in many of our small communities. So the cuts to assist individuals but also some of the community development funds, the economic development funds that have been used effectively by rural communities to support entrepreneurs, many of whom would like to provide child care services for healthy communities, have been jeopardized, and one of the most egregious things that we have seen from this administration as it relates to health care is they will sacrifice rural health care grants at almost every opportunity.

Many rural women are older. Many are eligible for Medicare and Social Security. But even young moms in smaller rural communities, we are talking about rural health care grants that go a long way to keep clinics open. And as she is struggling to also maintain a job and raise her children, you tack on to that the challenges to having health care services, especially in smaller communities that are working to revitalize themselves, but the budget situa-

tion and the priorities that have been so misplaced have jeopardized and make it harder for rural women to even get access, let alone the affordable health care that they need.

Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California. If I could just add, one of the things, and you are raising excellent points, women have so many challenges. Young women have so many challenges today. Young mothers have so many challenges today, such as access to affordable health care and access to quality and affordable child care.

Women disproportionately have lower-paying jobs that pay minimum wage, and we have not seen a raise in minimum wage to keep pace with inflation.

Really oftentimes I talk about the glass ceiling because there are still so many opportunities denied to women in the upper echelons of our workforce, but many women are just struggling to get up off the floor because they are working minimum-wage jobs and trying to raise kids. They are the heads of households. They face all of these challenges. And one of the best ways for women to get ahead, and this is something my immigrant parents really instilled in all of my brothers and sisters, I come from a family of seven, they said education is the key to opportunity in this country; you need to go to college.

When they told me this, it was a pretty radical notion for a traditional Latino family to say not just the boys need to go to college, but the girls also should go to college. One of the ways I financed my education was with Pell grants and students loans, loans which I am still paying back today.

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I still owe on my student loans. I make out that check every month. But it was the best investment I could have made in myself, because it opened the doors of opportunity.

When you talked about the President, his priorities being so out of place and opposite of what they should be, the first thing that jumped to my mind was they want to cut student aid programs. They want to freeze the maximum Pell Grant. Many young women who want to go to college rely disproportionately on Pell Grants and student aid to finance that and make that dream happen. Yet they are slashing that, which is, again, one of the best investments you could make.

If you talk about a young woman who is bright, she gets into college and cannot finance a college education, you are talking about not just making it that much harder for her to access these economic opportunities, but let's look at this realistically. If she is earning less because she is not able to get a college education or additional training, she is contributing less in the tax base in terms of our economy.

It is such a wise investment to help people further their education and careers, because they become higher income earners, they pay more into the

tax base, they spend more in their communities to help stimulate the economy. Yet we have an administration and a President who thinks nothing of making the biggest cuts to the student loan program in the whole program's history. Now, more than ever, we should think about investing in young women, not foreclosing those opportunities for them.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You are so right. You are choking off women's opportunities at every level. Whether we are talking about the freezing of Pell Grants, this President has proposed freezing funding for Head Start. Head Start, the place where disadvantaged kids, kids who it has been proven in study after study get their opportunity to succeed in school in a Head Start program, 19,000 kids would lose their opportunity to participate in Head Start.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. May I mention that my older sister, who was the older of the two to be elected to Congress, was a Head Start child. That program helped her become prepared for school, and helped my mother understand an education system that was totally foreign to her.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We come from three totally different kinds of communities. Like you in your community, I get stopped in the supermarket, I get stopped at my son's soccer games, at dance class, you name it. And the community I live in happens to be one that is sort of middle to upper middle-class, and it doesn't matter whether I am in the poorer section of my district or the wealthiest section of my district, people are scratching their heads. Their confidence in their government under this Republican leadership has been so badly shaken because of the corruption and the cronyism and the tax cuts and the priorities being totally wrong.

Ms. HERSETH. If the gentlewoman would yield, back to the point that Ms. SÁNCHEZ made about Head Start, Mr. Speaker, I think this is so important as it relates to Women's History Month and the importance of the Head Start Program, the women that have been a core part of this program, I represent nine sovereign Native Tribes in the State of South Dakota, and tribal women are among the strongest advocates for Head Start, in both the in-home program as well as the traditional Head Start Program.

So I could not agree more that any budget, whether it comes from the administration or the majority in this House, that would slash or freeze or not adequately fund Head Start programs to meet school readiness is inexcusable, as well as what had you both mentioned, and Ms. SÁNCHEZ, I too am paying off those student loans, how important it is to have access to ways to finance one's higher education to become that productive citizen, a taxpayer in one's community, giving back and finding good opportunities.

But when you look at the impact of the egregious budget reconciliation bill

that this House passed by two votes earlier this year, that found a third of its savings from Federal student loan programs, it is also inexcusable. And when you tack that on to what is happening as I mentioned with Head Start in Indian country, we have very high up employment rates, so you can imagine what Native women are faced with.

But the one thing I want to mention, because we have been focusing on a number of the challenges, especially as it relates to the budget and the misplaced priorities, when we talk about Women's History Month I want to highlight what will always stand out as a hallmark, one of the most significant achievements of women banding together and being advocates, and that is in the area of breast cancer research and awareness.

My grandmother that I was mentioning earlier, she was a breast cancer survivor. One of my aunts is also a breast cancer survivor. I think that is a model of advocacy in all of women's health and how we find creative ways to adequately fund the research, as we have done through the Department of Defense programs that have existed for that research, and to continue it in other areas, and to applaud the women, to applaud the women that were the strategists, that were the activists, that brought this to the attention of so many here in the halls of Congress to make sure that this serious health issue was addressed that paved the way for us to address other health issues for women that we know are continuing to be challenges for us.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. If you will yield, since we are on the topic of breast cancer, I want to mention two weeks ago I lost a Member of my staff in my district office. She had a 3-year battle with breast cancer. She died at the age of 49. She was the most wonderful, outspoken, helpful caseworker in our office.

Her husband said at her memorial service, "You know, Idalia Smith did not die. She was killed. She was killed by cancer." He was angry that more had not been done to try to help eliminate breast cancer in terms of one of these horrible diseases that causes such suffering and takes people from us far, far too soon.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is so sad how we literally now have reached the point in history where every person that you talk to can name a woman that they know that has touched their lives in some way that has fallen victim to breast cancer. One of my close friends, 42 years old, a mom of twin 5-year-olds, just passed away in December, also killed by breast cancer.

You know what is the most frustrating thing, is that we have only just in recent years been able to get NIH funding for women-specific disease study, and yet the President has now proposed a cut in funding for every institute in the NIH.

How are we going to reverse the trend in breast cancer? Breast cancer is

not even the leading cause of death in women in this country. It is heart disease. Heart disease is the leading cause of death. We only just accomplished having women-specific studies in that area.

Again, the priorities are just startling.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. I just have this to say. We have talked a little bit about priorities and we have talked about some very worthwhile programs that are being cut to the core, to the point where these kinds of services are going to be eliminated altogether, will be so crippled by lack of funding that they are not going to really function and serve the people they need to serve.

The question for me, and I get angry about this, I hear colleagues talk about how they care about breast cancer research, they care about preparing kids for kindergarten, they care about making sure that educational opportunities are available, yet they have no qualms about voting to slash these programs to the core so they can give tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans.

If that is not the clearest example of misplaced priorities, I don't know what is, because there is an old saying, you put your money where your mouth is. So you can talk about supporting something, but if you are not willing to put your money into that to support it, you are just giving lip service to it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Our colleague ROSA DELAURO from Connecticut has introduced legislation in the area of breast cancer that we still cannot get brought to this floor that would deal with drive-through mastectomies. You have women in this country now who, after having their breasts removed as a result of breast cancer surgery, are forced out of the hospital by their insurance company in 24 hours and less after a radical mastectomy, regardless of what their doctor thinks.

What Congresswoman DELAURO's legislation would do is it would ensure that it is the doctor, in consultation with the patient, that would decide what the appropriate length of stay is. That is legislation I worked on in Florida, and it is one that we should apply nationally. Yet we cannot get a hearing, even a hearing, on that bill under the Republican leadership in this Congress.

That is why it is so important. Listen, I will say this straight out. It is not just important that we have women serving in Congress; it is important that we have women who share the priorities of most women in America, who are willing to come here to the Congress and stand up for the things that we care about.

There is no point in having a woman here if she is just going to vote just like men have for generations, really, because why elect a woman then? We have got to make sure that we make progress, that we go forward. This leadership is not taking us forward. They

are not taking us forward by any measure.

Ms. HERSETH. If the gentlewoman would yield further, we have been focusing quite a bit on where the budget issues have been placing new challenges upon us, because of the priorities that are so questionable as it relates to women's health and education and equal pay and employment opportunities. But it doesn't just stop there.

This administration will take any way it can it seems to take issues that have been so important to young women in particular to undermine some of those achievements through regulatory proposals.

Take for example Title IX, another phenomenal achievement as we celebrate Women's History Month. Title IX has been an enormous success. It is a standard that for over 33 years now has ensured equal opportunity for women in athletics and contributed to the athletic, educational and health, but educational and athletic achievements of hundreds of thousands of young women, and because of Title IX young women's participation, Mr. Speaker, their participation in athletics has increased 400 percent at the college level and 800 percent in the high schools.

Girls and women who participate in sports receive great physical and psychological benefits. I can attest to that. I was a basketball player in high school and ran track and cross country and tried to continue to be active, but wasn't quite good enough for the Georgetown women's basketball team back in the early nineties.

But when we look at how girls and women who participate in sport receive that kind of benefit, including higher levels of confidence, their stronger self-images and lower levels of depression, the importance of Title IX I think can't be overstated. Yet what does this administration do, but propose new rules to undermine it.

On March 17 of last year, the Department of Education, without any notice or public input, issued a new Title IX policy under the guise of clarification that creates a major loophole through which schools can evade their obligation to provide equal opportunity in sports. The policy will allow the schools to gauge female students' interest in athletics by doing nothing more than an e-mail survey and then to claim in these days of excessive e-mail spam that a failure to respond to the survey shows a lack of interest in playing sports.

The so-called clarification eliminates the school's obligations to look broadly and proactively at whether they are satisfying women's interests in sports and will thereby perpetuate the cycle of discrimination in sports to which women have been subjected.

So this new clarification violates basic principles of equality and it threatens to reverse the enormous progress women and girls have made in sports since the enactment of Title IX in 1972, when the three of us were awful young.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. If I could just add, you have mentioned some of the great benefits to girls and women participating in sports. It leads to better physical health. It leads to better mental health, lower levels of depression in women who engage until regular physical activity. For girls, it promotes self-esteem and confidence that comes from gaining competence in something that they enjoy doing.

There are studies that even show that girls who engage in sports when they become women are more likely to leave abusive relationships than women who don't engage in sports.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I couldn't agree with you more.

We have been joined by a special member of the Women's Caucus, especially the Democratic Women's Caucus, for us someone who needs no introduction. But the gentlewoman from California has made history by becoming the first woman to lead either party's caucus in the United States House of Representatives. When she was elected as Democratic Leader, she broke glass ceilings that no woman thought was possible. We are so proud to have you join us for our special women's 30-something hour.

□ 2045

Ms. PELOSI. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and for her kind words. I commend the 30 Something women who are here, Congresswoman LINDA SÁNCHEZ of California, Congresswoman DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ of Florida and Congresswoman STEPHANIE HERSETH of South Dakota.

As I came to the floor, I heard the 30 Somethings talking about Title IX. First let me say, I am joining the 30 Somethings as a mother of 30-somethings. But I really want to salute you, DEBBIE, especially for the lead that you have taken on so many issues on the floor as the cochair of the 30 Somethings, and our colleagues who have joined you this evening for all of their exceptional leadership.

I heard you talking about Title IX when I came to the floor, and I do not know whether you mentioned this, because I was in a meeting before I got here, but in the Title IX fight, you cannot talk about it without saluting the great work of Patsy Mink, our former colleague who was a Congresswoman from Hawaii. It was her life's dream to pass the legislation for all of the reasons that you said, what it means in the lives of young girls and women in our country to have access to athletic and other privileges and rights of Title IX.

And I always like to tell the story that Patsy worked so hard on this, Patsy Mink did, and then it was going to be a very close fight. And at the time it met with great resistance; it still meets with some resistance here. But at the time it met with tremendous resistance in the Congress. But she got a promise from the Speaker

that she would have a vote on the floor on it, and it was going to be very close. She could win or lose by one vote.

When she got up that day to come to the floor to fight for the cause, she got word that her daughter was in an automobile accident. So she had to be a good mom, just exactly what her instincts would be, up and left, and they lost by like one vote or something.

But she was so persuasive, and with Patsy you might as well say yes right away, because you are going to sooner or later. The Speaker gave her another vote. That is when the bill was passed, at a later time. But there can be no discussion of it without the determination and the courage of Patsy Mink.

I am pleased to join my colleagues in honor of Women's History Month, a time to celebrate the historic contributions of women that they have made to our Nation. We remember those who fought for our progress. We recognize those who are changing communities today, that being the theme, and we rededicate ourselves to expanding opportunity for women.

We have been so blessed in this Congress with our young women, the 30 Something women who are bringing not only the voice of women, but a voice of their generation to the debate, and they are making the great difference.

In the past year, we have grieved the loss of several remarkable women who agitated and struggled for equality and progress. I call them magnificent disrupters: Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King, Betty Friedan. And then just yesterday we lost a person, Dana Reeve, who used her great personal challenge of her husband's paralysis to work so that other families would not have to endure the same pain.

Her fight to fulfill the potential of stem cell research brought these issues from the brink of oblivion now to the cusp, I hope, of success. As Dana said after the passing of her husband Christopher, no less than an American hero himself, today is the right moment to transform our grief into hope.

Even after her loss, and even after she suffered through her own dreadful illness, she fought for the hope that stem cell research gives to millions of Americans. Dana Reeve used the great personal challenge of her husband's paralysis to work so that other families would not have to endure the same pain.

The National Institutes of Health tell us that a range of diseases from Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease to spinal cord injuries to stroke, burns, heart disease, diabetes, maybe cancer, could potentially be addressed with this research. Perhaps it will be years or even decades before this potential is fulfilled. I hope not.

But Dana saw no excuse for setting back progress even 1 more day. By bringing hope to the sick and disabled with the miraculous potential of stem cell research, she has helped to continue the mending and renewing of the world that is possible through science.

Today we salute Dana's work and send our prayers to those who loved her, especially her son Will, who is 13 years old; and her two grown stepchildren, Matthew and Alexandra; her father and her two sisters.

I take the time to talk about her contribution because it is significant for all of us, and I know that she would have wanted me to use any time talking about her to talk about the cause. Today we have learned that former Governor Ann Richards of Texas has cancer of the esophagus. She made that announcement herself. I know that she will face this with courage and the resoluteness that is her signature. She never saw something wrong that she did not make right, but this, and so many others, makes clear the need for clear commitment to women's health in this country.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Governor Richards and her family today. I know she will beat this. We were so proud of her when she was Governor of Texas, and she makes us proud every day that she speaks out for the American people, women, children, families and Democrats.

I was fortunate enough to have her daughter Cecile work with me in my office. So I feel particularly, particularly blessed by the contributions that Ann Richards is making to our country.

In recognition of the theme of Women's History Month: Women, Builders of Community and Dreams, we cannot fail to recognize that there are dreams and communities left to build, especially on our gulf coast because of Katrina, Rita and Wilma.

Last week Speaker HASTERT and I led more than 30 Members of the House to the gulf coast. There we met women who were telling us about their struggle to rebuild their communities, to rebuild their dreams, the theme of Women's History Month.

Those women represent the thousands more who are struggling to rebuild, without the support they need from the Federal Government, and I hope that after our trip that support will soon come.

Despite the stories of loss, I also saw the spirit at work to rebuild the gulf coast to a region that is healthy, strong and prosperous. Women of the storm are particularly noteworthy in their effort, as a group of 100 Louisiana women who are fighting to rebuild a devastated gulf coast. That means not only Louisiana; Mississippi, Alabama, those affected in Florida, those affected in Texas.

One of the most compassionate members of the gulf coast community is Congresswoman and Ambassador Lindy Boggs, who we had the privilege of seeing when we were in Louisiana. I met with her last week. This week Lindy Boggs is celebrating her 90th birthday. Long before your time, my colleagues, when many of us served here with Lindy Boggs in the House of Representatives, indeed she came to Washington

in 1941 with her husband, Hale Boggs, and he was serving, and he became the Democratic whip of the House. Tragically his life was lost in an airplane accident, and she then indeed became a Member of Congress.

A woman of great intellect, graciousness and courage, Lindy Boggs taught all of us who served with her a great deal about politics, a great deal about the future of our country, and a great deal about how to do it in the nicest possible way. It worked for some; it did not work for others of us.

In any case, I can assure everyone that Lindy is as vivacious as always. When she left here, she went to be an Ambassador to the Vatican. And she was very proud to represent our country as the representative to the Holy See.

On the occasion of Women's History Month, I salute her and all of the lessons, thank her for all the lessons she taught Members of Congress and the great contribution that she is making to our country.

As we honor the accomplishments of great heroines who have restored hope in the face of impossible odds, we recognize that women are working to strengthen their communities today. We know their power. Women's History Month reminds us that women can and do change the course of history for all of us.

And today being International Women's Day, I was pleased that on Capitol Hill we had women legislators and public figures from Northern Ireland that I met, Afghanistan, Iraq, and many other countries. I just wanted to point out on this that we also received news from Speaker HASTERT, and I am very grateful to him, that we will have a joint session of Congress next week where we will hear from the newly elected President and newly inaugurated President of Liberia Johnson-Sirleaf, who will be visiting the United States on a state visit next week.

She will address a joint session of Congress. She is the first woman to ever be elected President of an African country. And I think I only remember one other woman addressing the Congress, a joint session of Congress. So it is very exiting and an appropriate way for us to celebrate International Women's Day and National Women's Month.

With that, again I salute my colleagues for calling this Special Order. More importantly, I salute them for their tremendous contribution to our country at their early ages. Congresswoman LINDA SÁNCHEZ is the first Hispanic woman, first Latino, ever to serve on the Judiciary Committee. She makes a great contribution to our country from that important, important post.

Congresswoman WASSERMAN SCHULTZ is on the Financial Services Committee where she fights for consumers and for including everyone in the economic success of our country.

And Congresswoman HERSETH and her valuable contribution to the Agri-

culture Committee, and other committees, on the Veterans Committee where she is already a ranking member of the committee so soon. How wonderful.

Well, I congratulate you all. I thank you and appreciate what you are doing this evening and what you are doing for our country.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back to the gentlewoman from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you so much for joining us. Normally when we do our 30-Something hour, Madam Leader, we thank you in absentia for the opportunity to spend the time during this hour talking about the things that are a priority to our generation. So it is a privilege to be able to personally thank you for this opportunity that you give us each night. It is an honor to serve under your leadership.

Ms. PELOSI. Well, I appreciate you saying that, because what we are about here is the future. Everything we do should be about are we honoring our responsibility to make the future better for the next generation? That has been the tradition in America from our Founders until the present. And I hope that we can prevail in this fight to make the future better for the next generation. We owe it to our children. We owe it to the next generation.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Leader, the way we close our time usually with the 30-Something Working Group is by plugging our Web site, www.housedemocrats.gov/30somethings. We encourage our colleagues and anyone who cares to sign on to that. We have a lot of charts and interesting facts and figures that are important to the next generation.

I want to thank my colleagues from California and South Dakota for joining me tonight and welcome you back any time because we are here every night.

Mr. Speaker, with that we yield back.

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak before the House tonight. I want to thank the leadership for allowing me to participate in this hour. I thank the conference chair, Congresswoman PRYCE, for her leadership.

And I want to come tonight with a number of colleagues, and we come with what we call the Official Truth Squad. And we call it that because a group of freshman Congressmen, in our class there are 25 or so freshman Congressman, who have now served in Congress for about 15 months, and when we get together on a regular basis, one of the overarching concerns that we voice to each other over and over and over